



Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.
Creative Solutions for Land Planning and Design

Draft Open House Summary

Held: June 25, 2014 5:00-8:00
City Hall, Elk River, MN
Approx. 75 people attended (38 signed in)

A community open house was held on June 25th, 2014 to present the needs assessment and parks and recreation survey results and to get initial input on priorities for the future. Approximately 75 people attended. The meeting was an open house format with display boards organized by the following topic areas:

- Welcome and Project Overview
- Needs Assessment and Community Survey Results
- Input on Framework for the Future and Priorities
 - Connect to the rivers
 - Create signature parks (community destination parks with high quality and/or unique recreation experiences)
 - Trail connections
 - Improve existing parks

Opportunities for input included:

1. Talking with City staff and consultants about plans, ideas, and suggestions.
2. Indicating what participants like, don't like, ideas, and priorities for the future by writing on the displays and by placing red and green dots on the displays.
3. Providing ideas, suggestions, and comments on an individual comment card.
4. On-line input June 19 to July 13

The following is a summary of written comments collected at the meeting organized by topic area.

Connect to the Rivers

- *General Comments*
 - Would like to see a high quality community park at Houlton that doesn't compete with other area parks.
 - Would rather promote and improve the use of all existing public land already on rivers, we don't need more.
 - Why make a riverfront park when there is a great one in Otsego (Wright County Park)
 - Because access to the river is a resource that cannot be replaced! And it should be open to all!
 - Parking could be improved.
- *Priorities (+ # indicates a green dot for "Agree", -# a red dot for "Disagree")*
 - Improve riverfront connectivity: **3+**
 - Acquire Houlton Farm property: **6+, 6-**
 - Where feasible, develop a riverfront trail: **6+, 2-**

- Improve access to the water (docks/beaches/launches, etc.): **6+**
- *Bailey Point Possibilities*
 - Habitat restoration: **2+**
 - Nature observation: **2+**
 - Restrooms: **2+**
 - Picnic tables/benches: **3+**
 - Hiking trails: **1+**
 - Boardwalks: **2+**
 - Canoe/kayak launch: **4+**
 - Interpretive signage: **1+**
 - Other: Suggestion for no motors

Trails & Connectivity

- *General Comments*
 - By connecting neighborhoods to the Great Northern Trail (GNT), allows for family interactions, running clubs and biking clubs be formed, athletic teams to practice in a safe environment, and the ability to increase safety (bikes and walkers off major roads) throughout the community. Also a strong selling point for city.
 - Dangerous roadway along 221st from Ridges of Rice Lake to GNT. Roadway has a hill, no shoulder, high speeds, and small children on bikes/roller blades. Extremely dangerous. An accident waiting to happen as some large trucks don't move over to pedestrians.
 - It is a well-known fact that a well-maintained, larger trail system with many facets increases home values as it adds to the desire of community.
 - A focus on inter-community connections before going out of community.
 - Pave a trail from Orono Pkwy to library bike rack.
 - [Circled Hwy 10] Bridge abutments. Can there be a trail on this?
- *Priorities(+ # indicates a green dot, -# a red dot)*
 - Connect GNT to parks, downtown, and the river: **13+**
 - Develop connections from neighborhoods to GNT with the GNT acting as a recreation spine: **7+**
 - Support extension of GNT north the Princeton: **8+, 1-**
 - Close gaps in the trail system: **10+**

Improve Existing Parks

- *General Comments*
 - Rice Lake Park
 - Very dangerous hill, busy road, trail needed for everyone especially kids. High speed trucks. No shoulder.
 - Small park at Rice Lake Park. No playgrounds on the north end of town. No safe connection to trail or parks!!
 - Pinewood Park
 - Pinewood is missing and I'm disappointed this has already been removed as a park
 - Pinewood has more petitioners than you have responses!! Don't let it go!!
 - We want Pinewood golf course back! It is missed
 - Why is Pinewood not on the list? From the survey golf is high on the list and yet we don't offer it now? It is or was the only place for teens who don't skateboard to be active outdoors!

- Pinewood is a good place for non-organized opportunities.
 - Limited opportunities for non-organized activities [otherwise]
 - Agree, need active adult opportunities
- I am a senior golfer. I like to walk 9 holes for fun & exercise. Pinewood Golf Course is a much-needed facility. I consider it extremely important.
- As a senior over 40x2+11, I need to keep exercising at Pinewood Golf Course!! Seniors are important too! And it is neat to see the younger kids there too!!
- Remove Y.A.C. and replace on underused fairgrounds property
- Skate Park
 - Rebuilding of old skate park
 - Skate park is a need!!
 - We need a skate park!!!
- Trail to connect Trout Brook Farm/Twin Lakes Estates to Twin Lakes Elementary School.
- [On undeveloped park north of Orono Park] Quality outdoor basketball court.
- Priorities
 - Continue to maintain existing parks and recreation facilities: **9+**
 - One dot was for Pinewood
 - Save Pinewood and start maintaining it
 - Develop strategies for private ownership or lease of properties with poor access and overlapping services: **3-** (*note: this likely related to keeping pinewood*)
 - Continue to make improvements to parks to respond to community needs and recreation trends: **6+**
 - Add key facilities (ie Skate park, etc.): **7+, 2-**

Signature Parks

- Orono Park + Dave Anderson Athletic Complex (DAAC)
 - *What works well?*
 - Well maintained (1+)
 - Softball fields are nice
 - New playground is fantastic (1+)
 - Port-a-potties are clean & big
 - *What could be improved?*
 - Bathroom facilities @ DAAC
 - Weed control
 - Score boards
 - Boat landing
 - Wider buffer strip in front of lake
 - Turn ballpark lights off @ 10:30pm or before
 - Outdoor pool, swim park
 - Shade facilities on the beach
 - Splash pads
 - Connectivity to trails/neighborhoods
 - Need more things for Junior High/High School – Pinewood is good for this
 - Ideas for the Future?
 - Paved parking lot
 - Skate park
 - Local businesses will chip in
 - Give kids a place to go
 - High quality basketball court – outdoor

- Outdoor pool
 - Add field house to YMCA, off north end of gym
- Lions Park
 - *What works well?*
 - Add (update) playground
 - *What could be improved?*
 - More/better hockey rinks
 - Better utilization of space
 - Connect to other neighborhoods/trails
 - Building needs flexibility for multi-use
 - *Ideas for the future?*
 - Enhance use through better downtown connection (1+)
- Woodlands Trails
 - *What works well?*
 - We love it, good as is
 - *What could be improved?*
 - Playground
 - Picnic area + drinking water
 - *Ideas for the future?*
 - Playground
 - Allow gathering activities (berries, mushrooms, sheds, etc.)
- Youth Athletic Complex
 - *What works well?*
 - Good fields
 - Maintenance is good
 - *What could be improved?*
 - Could be closer to “town”
 - *Ideas for the future?*
 - Bathrooms (3+)
 - Lights
 - More access to fields for youth softball
 - Drinking water
 - Skate park
 - Score board
 - Remove and replace on fairground property

Other Comments

- Doing a good job with activities and parks. Enough said. However, liking golf and the beautiful Pinewood Golf Course, I feel like you are leaving something out of your park plan. That course is very important to a lot of people and should be a priority! We moved to E. R. 10 years ago and that was a part of our reasoning. We do not have kids to frequent parks, so golf at that senior friendly course was our “park.”

Also, would like to see an enclosed community pool that would support senior aquatics. Cannot afford the Y and is something lacking in E. R.

Please keep Pinewood!!!
- I think strongly Pinewood Golf Course needs to be kept. I have lived other places – Elk River does not truly appreciate what it has here – A golf course easily accessible to people. I live one mile from Pinewood. It is so nice to be able to get to the course easily. It is a great 9 hole course which I can walk for exercise while also having fun! Please save the course for young, in-between, and senior golfers!

Summary 7.2.2014

June 25, 2014 Open House, Elk River Parks and Recreation Master Plan

- If you're going to do golf well, look at the Elk River Country Club. Incorporate into Woodland Trails Park and create a new regional park.
- Keep public golf as an activity. Great for all ages. I'm interested in concerts in the park as well as golf.